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Dec. 9, 16, 23, & 30, 1893.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM  
YEAR TO YEAR."

## All the Year Round

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

PART 60.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

## A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

No. 258.—THIRD SERIES. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1893. PRICE TWOPENCE.

### THROUGH THE RANKS.

By MRS. LEITH-ADAMS.

(MRS. R. S. DE COURCY LAFFAN.)

Author of "*Aunt Hepsy's Foundling*," "*My Land of Beulah*," "*Bonnie Kate*," "*The Peyton Romance*," etc., etc.

#### CHAPTER XV. AT LOVE'S CLEAR CALL.

PEOPLE went about saying it was a grand autumn, for the bright, sunny days continued, and the yellow leaves, flickering as they fell, looked like flights of golden butterflies, things too pretty and airy to be associated in men's thoughts with death and decay. Even the birds that had been silent all through the summer heat, began to ask one another, in little low, questioning notes, if there might not be some mistake, and a new sort of springtime were not visiting the earth, making all things new. But there are times and seasons in the lives of men when the radiance of the sun and the beauty of the world seem as jarring notes, and an added burden to that which presses already too heavily upon shrinking shoulders.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the woods that surrounded the Wish-ing Well; the little house which turned its side-face to the road was resplendent, for the stonecrop on its thatch was bright with flowers, and a Virginia creeper, now one crimson glory, clung to the brown wall and festooned the low gable like a banner.

The pigeons in their aerial homes cooed mightily; were restless, too, for no one came out to them with deftly held apron, or called to them in a voice as soft and mellow as their own. There was no one to be seen in all the sunshine-flooded garden, except that ridiculous Phelim, and

he was evidently suffering from mental depression, for he lay all along under the shadow of the hedge, his nose upon his paws, and his ears hanging flaccid like the empty sails of a wherry, of which his tail might have been the bowsprit.

The pretty birds flew hither and thither, as if seeking something they had lost. Now and again one, bolder than its fellows, would light upon the moss-grown window-sill, pecking at the tiny diamond panes with its soft bill, yet all unheeded. Within was a woman whose heart was riven, whose eyes were dim with sorrow.

No one could stand between Norah and that fearful load of grief. When the people saw her kneeling in the little chapel where the red light ever burned before the altar; when they saw her head bowed upon the clasped hands from which hung the beads and cross; when they saw her shake as the young sapling shakes when the wind of heaven blows upon it, and saw the big tears falling on the floor, then they crossed themselves with frenzied vehemence, and moaned and prayed aloud after the manner of their kind; but from Norah's white lips came no sound. They would stand aside in the road, these simple people, to let her pass, muttering: "Ah now, the craythur! See now the looks av her!" then call upon their many saints; but they all recognised, with the keen intuitiveness of their race, that she stood apart—that no comfort could avail her. She was sacred in their eyes, for her gentle ways had won them long ago; and she was their pride and joy once, though now the fair head was brought so low; and they loved the English lady who came to see her, discoursing among themselves of the wonder and mystery that a heretic should be so tender and so good.



It seemed, indeed, as if Alison's sympathy was the one thing Norah clung to.

Look at her—the poor child! with her eyes heavy with nights of weeping, and full of a terrible fear—wide, strained, like those of a child who has seen some terrible thing, and in fancy sees it again and again. See with what a convulsive twitching her hand clings to Alison's; see how the strained eyes search her face as if for some sign of hope or consolation! Heaven knows poor Alison stands as sorely in need of comfort herself; yet, in the midst of her own pain, she is able to give out comfort and sustaining power to that sad one beside her. The discipline of sorrow has already taught her that highest of all lessons. She is able to put herself aside altogether for the moment. Ah, blessed gift! It is a strange situation, in which these two women are placed. The man that each loves lies, as it were, at the point of death; death stares him in the face. Harry Deacon lies under arrest for the murder of Colour-Sergeant Smith; further, he is also accused of the blackest crime known to military law—the assassination of his superior officer. The Colour-Sergeant lies in the dreary hospital ward, drawing each painful breath as though it were a knife-blade thrust into his breast; death stands at his pillow with upraised hand ready to strike. And these two women are agonising, hour by hour, and day by day; the one openly in the sight of all the world, the other in the secret torture-chamber of her own heart; and heaven is besieged with prayers. Their thoughts, indeed, are prayers which, as winged messengers, fly heavenwards and cry for mercy.

The interior aspect of the once cheerful little living-room has undergone a sad change since we saw it last. Of that spick-and-span neatness, that shining order, so rare in an Irish cabin, not much is left.

The cushion, with its bobbins all entangled, is shoved away on an old settle; one bobbin, indeed, has fallen from a snapped thread and rolled into a corner of the bricked floor; a trifle, perhaps, but like the straw whirled by the current, showing the drift of things. A bunch of gilly-flowers, brown, withered, and long since dead, stands on the little mantel. Every detail tells the story of a desolation deep and complete; and Norah's figure as she sits by the table, her hands supporting her chin, the dark tangled locks falling about her pale cheek and brow, suits well with her surroundings. Alison stands

near, looking down upon her with her pitiful eyes; eyes that look as though no sleep had visited them, but only tears.

How long is it, measured by time, since she heard the tearing whistle of that fatal shot? Measured by feeling, it is a lifetime. She stood there in the quiet, sunlit room, busying herself with the tea—one woman; since then, she has been some one else. She feels in a dazed sort of way, that she shall never reach back to that past estate. Will the story of her life—her vivid, passionate life of the last few months, die out in darkness, all unknown? Shall she never again see the face that looked at her from under the shadowy trees, the face full of bitter regret and wild, unspoken longing? Shall she never again hear the voice that spoke the words that have thrilled her with their memory ever since?

"I am a man, you are a woman, and—I have dared to love you." Then comes the rhythm of a song:

Over the pathless ocean,  
Under the burning sun,  
No matter where I wander,  
Thoughts of you, sweet, will come.  
Bid me good-bye, good-bye, love,  
Bid me good-bye, good-bye.  
Say, will you miss me, darling? . . .

Ah, Heaven! will the fond and foolish words never cease ringing in her maddened ears; will no chance be given her to murmur one word of farewell to the dying man, to give one loving touch to the dear hand before it grows cold and lifeless?

Should she hear the wail of the death-march, the measured tramp of feet, the sharp ping of the shots fired across an open grave; should she have to stand calmly by and hear the people say, "Oh, the pity of it, so excellent a soldier, cut off thus in the very prime of his strength and manhood!" and murmur some inarticulate reply, while the heart within her should be as lead, and the sight of her eyes fail for the burning, pressed-back tears? Worse still, should she see it all forgotten in some new wonder; should she steal on the sly to the graveyard, find out the headstone erected by his comrades to his memory, lay a wee white flower at the foot of the snow-white cross, and cry, "I loved you—I loved you—but—we were parted so far"? Can the dead hear? Maybe; but they cannot answer, and the silence that stifles us is unbroken.

It is this awful coming silence that Alison dreads. She could have scourged herself for letting her thoughts drift self-

wards, with that poor sorrowing girl before her; but it had been like that with Alison in these bitter days, wherever she went, or whatever she was doing, the undercurrent was always there. It seemed mixed up with the memory of the flowing river, the brown, foam-flecked water running on and on, the shifting shadows of the night, the shriek of the fiddle on the hill.

There has been a silence; not an empty silence, but one full of throbbing thoughts. The pigeons have been having it all their own way—coo-roo, coo-roo—and Alison has suddenly called to mind the picture of Norah, happy and smiling, with the pretty birds crowding round her, climbing on to her shoulder with their little pink feet, and thrusting their soft beaks into the meshes of her hair. Well might one say, watching her now, "Look on this picture and on that." What a lifetime seems to lie between the two! It is Norah who breaks this silence, and her voice has the ring of an abiding sorrow.

"Shure, Miss Alison, the heart av me wint out to him, an' niver come back at all, an' now whin he's in the cold valley o' sorro' it clings to him the closer. I pray the blissid saints all night an' day to lev it be a bit o' warmth to him, this dear love that bates as thrus to him now as in thim first swate days. Ah, Miss Alison dear, will they be afther chokin' the young life out av him for the sin that he's sinned? Will they take him from our sight for iver, he that's so dear to me—dear to me past the spakin' av? And what for would he shoot the beautiful Sergeant that niver did him a bit of harm at all, at all? Shure an' it was just lettin' off his gun he was, to pass the time away, an' the Sergeant he got in the way widout manin' it, an' Harry shot him widout manin' it; an' I'll be up an' afther tillin' the court an' the judge an' jury, an' all the grand gentlemen assimbled, as that was the way av it, an' niver a lie tould."

But here—poor, fond, distracted soul!—she casts herself down on her knees, and that bitter cry goes up that is to haunt Alison Drew for many and many a day to come. "Oh, my Harry, my Harry! He wasn't as good as many, but dearer to me than the best. Oh, why couldn't I keep him? It wasn't much to ask. My Harry, my Harry!"

It seemed to ring out into the sun-bright air as Alison hastened home; it

seemed to pursue her like some tortured, impalpable thing.

And she, she hadn't the right to cry out for what fate had wrested from her; hers must be a silent sorrow, a stifled pain. As the road dipped and she passed into the valley, the bells of Shandon broke out into a peal. It was a saint's day, or some festival, and they were making merry over it, tumbling over each other into the vale beneath, soft and sweet, joyous and gay.

On Patrick's Hill Alison met the Sergeant-Major, dignified, massive, ineffable, and, a little to his surprise it must be confessed, stopped him and asked, in quite a commonplace tone—such power have a certain type of women over themselves in extreme moments—how the Colour-Sergeant was reported to be that afternoon.

The Sergeant-Major stood stiffly to attention—a lamp-post could not be stiffer—and informed the lady, in the longest words he could call up upon so short a notice, that the injured man was as bad as bad could be to keep any hold on life at all. This was all that Alison gained by her indiscretion, and she caught her breath sharply two or three times as she made her way onwards.

At this time the Hundred and Ninety-Third was in a very disturbed state. A military murder at all times gives the regiment in which it happens an undeniable notoriety; and in the present state of affairs in the south of Ireland, such an incident was peculiarly undesirable. A certain paper did, indeed, show the sensational heading of "Disaffection and Suspected Disloyalty in one of our Line Regiments," and all alike dreaded that heading coming to the Colonel's knowledge. Blizzard, reading it in the ante-room with starting eyes, had the presence of mind to sit upon the paper promptly; but this was only dallying with the inevitable. Of course the Chief saw it; kept silence—glaring—at mess; and the next morning, the orderly-room was compared by many irate ones to a certain undesirable locality, which popular superstition affirms to be unpleasantly warm as to climate. Chubby especially came to grief; for the Chief—who hated his young officers marrying—had heard of his engagement to Miss Henniker; indeed, never was so injured a creature as Mr. Charles Verrinder when, the same afternoon, he sought for consolation in the society of his beloved. It must be allowed that he and Elsie were the most aggressively cheerful

lovers. The sturdy Midland Rector knew all about it by this time, and had said "Bless my soul!" many times over. Verrinder's sisters had written to beg for photographs of Elsie; the sexton had heard the news, scratched his head, and said to every one who came to look into the grave he was digging: "Malster Charles have got a sweetheart—sure-ly. T' Rector he tould me so his own blessed self, an 'tis a true tale—so it be." The young couple had every prospect of long waiting, and seemed to thrive upon it. They appeared to possess an unlimited stock of sunshine of their own, and to ask for nothing better than the present state of things. Alison felt almost a traitor to carry such an aching heart in her breast when two such happy creatures were about. Verrinder had just been telling Mrs. Henniker and Elsie how that the only man in the regiment who was not wildly indignant at Deacon's rash act being looked upon as "disaffection," was Ellerton, when Alison came in.

"How pale and tired you look! Oh, Alison!" cried Elsie, darting from her lover's side, and pushing a low lounge-chair near to the small pine-knot fire which glimmered cheerfully in the grate. "She shall not go upstairs to take off her things, shall she, mother, till she has had some tea?"

They had all been very tender over Alison ever since that day when Elsie found Hugh Dennison kneeling by the senseless girl in fear and anguish unspeakable. The others were not so much afraid as he; they had seen her like that before—so they told him—after her mother died. She had never been really strong since then, and she had been taking it out of herself sadly, being so much with poor little Patsey. Mrs. Musters had told them she was quite in a prostrate condition when she got to Monte Notte the night the child died. But Hugh Dennison now knew all the truth, and even the faintest hope lived in his heart no longer. All he thought of was Alison herself, and of what her suspense and misery must be. He honoured her too deeply to question aught she did; and the secret that in another woman he might have thought something savouring of dishonour, in her was certain to be pure and good. He was sure of this, and always should be, even if he never knew anything more than that one glance at her terror-stricken face had taught him. He was puzzled; but his faith in the woman he

loved and honoured above all others was unshaken.

"Isn't Mr. Ellerton a pig?" said Elsie, resuming the conversation into which Alison's entrance had broken, and by this remark it will be gathered that the Major was not present.

"He said," continued Verrinder, "'pon his soul he shouldn't be surprised if Deacon was mixed up with a nasty lot, meaning——"

"Fenians," said Elsie promptly.

"Hu—sh!" cried Chubby at this. "Believe me, my dear girl, the very walls have ears."

"Nasty things," said Elsie.

"I don't know about Tim," said Alison, speaking with evident effort, "but if Mr. Ellerton means Norah, he is much mistaken. Her one thankfulness has been all along that Deacon had nothing to say to anything of that sort. She told me he thought himself ill-treated; her very words were that he 'had a grudge—and—and——'"

"Shot the wrong man," put in Elsie. "I heard her say that. By the way, I wonder who the right man was?"

"She did not tell me that," said Alison, and then no one said any more, for the door opened, Major Henneker came in, followed by Dr. Musters, and there was that in their faces that held everybody silent.

The Major crossed to Alison's side. She had risen to her feet, and stood facing him with a terrible eagerness in her eyes.

"My girl," said the Major, and his voice thrilled and shook; "my girl, we have all loved and trusted you, we will try—to trust—you—still——"

The man's pride was bleeding; all his ideas of what was right and seemly were outraged, and yet with the generosity of a noble nature he wished to be both just and tender. He laid his hand somewhat heavily on Alison's shoulder as he spoke, and she felt it tremble; but she looked bravely into his face, and then past him to Dr. Musters, holding out her hands.

"Have you come for me?" she said, and her voice sounded to them all as the voice of a stranger.

"Yes," said the doctor, who was pale and grave, and whose lips twitched as he spoke.

Alison turned to Major Henneker, and laid her arm about his neck.



"I must go, uncle dear," she said; "but say that I may—will you? It will help me in what is—coming."

"Go," he said, turning from her with a groan, and Elsie, clinging to her mother, broke out sobbing.

Nobody quite knew how Mrs. Masters got into the room, but that remarkable woman was there in their midst, her round, substantial features wearing an expression of much fright and bewilderment, but still not without a certain air of resolve.

"I don't know what it's all about," she said, twisting her little fat hands the one in the other; "but Geoffrey says it's got to be—and so I suppose it's all right. Any way, I thought I was the best person to go with her, so I came across."

It was a strange little procession enough which, a few moments later, set out to the hospital; the two men, and—reversing the usual order of things, the two women—following. Of course, the Scotch Sergeant received them as if such visits were things of everyday occurrence and quite a matter of course—a stolidity which had in it something helpful to them all. How silent the hospital! How their feet echoed on the steep stone stairs! Here and there a blue-coated figure moved stealthily; and as the Sergeant entered a small isolated ward, an orderly left the side of a low cot-bed and passed them.

With a light like a flame on her face, Alison went straight up to the dying man, and, wholly undismayed by the horrible change which had taken place in him since last she saw him, fell softly on her knees by the bed.

"I am come," she said, and then, gazing each at the other as though they could never gaze their fill, both kept silence.

Mrs. Masters, seated by a window at the end of the ward, was crying quietly into her pocket-handkerchief, and the Major stood with folded arms and outwardly impassive face at the foot of the cot.

When every breath you draw cuts you like a knife, and the sweat beads upon your brow every moment, you cannot be very eloquent over what you have to say.

"I asked them to tell me—when the end was coming—and then—I sent for you—"

"I am here."

"Will you tell me—that I am—for—"

given? It will make it easier for me—if you will."

As Ruth may have looked when she took her stand by Naomi, so looked Alison Drew, kneeling by that humble bed, and in that bare and whitewashed room. The light of an exquisite resolve and self-surrender was in her eyes; she was as one who has passed beyond the things of this world, and gained some divine standpoint, where nothing stands but absolute truth.

She threw her head back, raising her clasped hands.

"If you are going to leave me, take this knowledge with you: I love you—love you—love you. Whatever distances between us, to me you are a most sweet and noble gentleman, and I am proud to think you love me, as I know you do."

She bent over him, and kissed him lingeringly and softly on his poor white face, once, twice, thrice.

Then, with a look of fear, she sprang to her feet. A change had passed upon him. His eyes had lost their look of consciousness; he moved his head restlessly from side to side upon the pillow, moaning and muttering. It showed how well Major Henneker understood the nature he had to deal with, that he did not attempt to take Alison away from a sight which to many women would have been unbearable.

"Can you tell what he is saying?" said the Sergeant—always impassible—but coming forward promptly and bending over the unconscious face.

"He is talking about the choir singing," said Alison. "He thinks it is choir practice—listen!"

"Come, boys," said the lips, which the deep moustache could not hide, so white and bloodless were they; "come on—you will be late. . . ."

Then a pause, while the restless hands began to pluck the coverlet, and a look of longing, of restless, craving desire, came across the poor, sunken face.

"I am listening," he muttered, "but I cannot hear her voice—I cannot hear her voice. . . ." and the murmured words died into a fretful moaning.

What happened then, no one that heard and saw could ever forget.

The red sunset light came in through the high, uncurtained window, and to that light Alison raised her eyes. They were as the eyes of a mystic in a moment of exaltation; her hands were knotted, the one in the other, in a passionate grip; and

in another moment the clear, beautiful voice rose high, filling the ward :

The King of Love my Shepherd is,  
His goodness faileth never ;  
I nothing lack if I am His,  
And He is mine—for ever.

A smile lay upon the sick man's mouth, his eyes closed softly, the restless head was still, the hands outstretched and still.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill  
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me,  
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
Thy Cross before to guide me.

One or two men who were loitering in the barrack square came beneath the window to listen, pulling off their caps and standing there bareheaded in the dying sunlight.

#### PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL.

THE other day a certain Circuit of the United Methodist Free Church assembled, and passed the following resolution : "That this meeting deeply deplores the many terrible deaths resulting from the game of football, and urges upon Her Majesty's Government the great importance of so amending the law as to make it a capital offence for one man to kick his fellow to death on the football field."

Such a resolution would not, we fancy, get very far on its way to the Home Secretary, at whom, presumably, it was aimed. It seems rather foolish. Possibly some gentleman, connected with this particular Circuit, was related to a football player who chanced to die from an injury accidentally received during the game. If so, his personal feelings in the matter do credit to his heart ; though the resolution which was their outcome can scarcely be said to do credit, either to his own head or to the united intellect of the above-mentioned Circuit.

It is at least likely that the gentlemen of this Circuit never witnessed a football match. The fact would not put them out of count as critics of the game. Quite otherwise. None know better than professional writers that the imagination can often caper most effectively about a subject, into the very elements of which its owner has not taken the trouble to look. Take as the classic example that brave report of Blackheath football, sent by a Frenchman in London to a Parisian journal :

"This is what I saw. The players pre-

cipitated themselves furiously upon each other ; arms and legs were instantly dislocated ; collar-bones broken ; children of tender years limped off the field with fatal injuries ; and all round were weeping mothers and distracted fathers, tending their bruised and battered offspring. . . . Anon the game was resumed, amidst howls and execrations from all sides. Fragments of clothing, and of hair and skin, torn ruthlessly from the heads and bodies of the rivals, strewed the field. It was a spectacle terrible and affecting. I turned away with tears in my eyes."

Can anything be more moving than this description ? Truly nothing. It is Homeric in its vigour, and worthy of Munchausen for its veracity. The worthy gentlemen of the United Methodist Free Church must really, we think, have read this notable report and had their reason temporarily unsettled by it. If so, let them take comfort for the Home Secretary's brutal indifference to their resolution—if it ever reached him—in our earnest assurance that the Frenchman's narrative was a dainty Gallic falsehood, designed to divert the wise, deceive the ignorant, and foster a distaste for English institutions across the Channel.

But, on the other hand, we would not go to the opposite extreme and aver with some that the perils of football, as now played, are not greater than those daily incurred by travellers betwixt Charing Cross and Cheapside. That is a convenient but preposterous euphemism. The ordinary pedestrian Citywards does not put himself in the way of bodily peril. An omnibus may fall on its side and crush him ; a dog may suddenly become rabid, and choose him for its first or second victim ; or a shop sign may become detached from its support and immolate his hat and brains in one fell swoop. Such possibilities, however, are distinctly of the extraordinary kind.

The professional football player is in a different case. Though rules be ever so emphatic, and referees ever so firm and Argus-eyed, who is to assure him that by the merest chance he shall not get his spine injured, a broken nose or a broken leg ? There are abundant instances of such accidents. Only a few weeks ago a poor young Yorkshireman died of a broken neck incurred in a Cup competition. This would not claim such individual notice but for the fact that he had lingered in the hospital nearly a year after the event. The trainer and medicine man

are essential parts of every first-class football team nowadays. Both hold themselves in readiness to run at a moment's warning to the field of play, with liniments and bandages. There is, in short, an undoubted risk about football. One cannot marvel that a tender-natured mother feels something of the bitterness of bereavement when she says good-bye to her athletic first-born, upon his departure for a season's football with a team which has a reputation for rough play, which provokes retaliation. Even the Muse is not silent on the subject:

When autumn leaves are falling,  
And nature doth the soul enthrall,  
We may not meet again on earth, love,  
I'm going to play football.  
Farewell, and perhaps for ever;  
I'm going to play football.

These lines, from a song entitled "The Half-Back's Farewell," may be read—or sung—seriously or with a latent smile of amused scepticism. In either case they serve equally well as warrant for the belief that no man knows how he may leave the football field on any particular afternoon. The famous Sir Henry Sidney, who, in 1566, wrote to his son, then at Shrewsbury School, these words of prudent advice: "Use exercise of body, but such as is without peril of your joints or bones," would in no manner have allowed the lad to become a professional football player.

It is not, perhaps, generally known that there are Football Insurance Unions. Nor is it a matter of common knowledge that in the North and Midlands, where football excitement is keenest, the Press finds it profitable to issue coupons with certain of its weekly sheets, which entitle the owners thereof to five pounds if, having signed the same, they should be so fortunate, or unfortunate, as to break arms or legs at football.

All this is evidence that there is a suspicion of danger in modern football. We do not need the swollen lists of accidents in a season, compiled by opponents of the game, to make us aware of it. But, considering the number of clubs in the land, the proportion of such accidents to players is really very small indeed, and of fatal or serious accidents too small to be worth mentioning.

The people will have sport in one way or another. That may be taken as an axiom. Hence the enormous growth of football as a spectacle, and its development until it has come to be called a

science. This would, perhaps, be very sad if it could be proved that the players themselves suffered in this new aspect of the game; if it were obvious that they were unwilling tools of a capricious and ungenerous master; and if they degenerated as human beings in the exercise of this new profession.

But how stands the case really?

From the writer's experience of them, paid professional football players are not at all necessarily debased by their brief career. It is very absurd to imagine that a man may go on to the football field and deliberately main an antagonist with impunity. Never were referees more dead against fouls of all kinds. The player with a reputation for brutality is likely soon to be without an engagement. He must coerce his unregenerate instincts in this direction if he means to gain honour, acclamation, and the pelf that is the outward and visible testimony of his honourable skill as a player. We have known a regular termagant of a fellow, reckless and rough to a degree as an unpaid player, sober down as a professional into an admirable exponent of the game.

To be sure, the men are subjected to enough temptations. Few of us could, without a little dizziness, stand such adulation as they receive. Some of them fall, of course. It is hard to resist the Epicurean lures that assail them in the prime of their young manhood: the smiles of womankind, the brimming pewter, proffered with kindly intent but lamentable result, and the other temptations which hold out the hand to them and plead to be caressed. What think you of such an advertisement as the following?

#### FOOTBALLERS.

Wanted, at once, a good man.  
If he gets a try,  
Can have a tobacco shop;  
If he gets a goal,  
Can have a public-house.

There need not be much amiss with the career of tobaccoist in conjunction with that of football player; but the public-house is another matter. Yet some hundreds of first-class professionals are publicans as well, and do not appear corrupted. One can understand the attraction such a life has for them. It must be enchanting, after a bright though fatiguing afternoon's play, to retire to one's own smoke-room, and there, an uncrowned king, receive homage and

flattery from one boon companion and customer after another. It is, moreover, a "métier" that makes provision for summer as well as winter, and in which one's wife may be an effective helper. And that it suits the athlete is clear from the liking your retired pugilist and sprinter have for it. Still, the glamour of the pint pot is about it; and the siren Beer is often a most unmitigated hussy.

But those who come to grief over these obstacles owe it surely to themselves, and not to the "profession" which gave them the opportunity of rising superior to temptation. This is, perhaps, rather a lofty way of looking at it, yet it seems to be sensible.

The average football professional may have been a bricklayer, an iron-worker, or a potter ere he took service with a team and entered public life. If he is prudent he does not lose grip of his old employment when he signs his professional indenture, and receives his fifty shillings or three pounds a week for eight months in the year. At least, not all at first. Opportunities of bettering himself are bound to occur, especially if, as he well may, he saves a part of his professional earnings. And it is really monstrous to suppose, as some seem to, that the professional is, as it were, compelled to squander his football pay in nips and convivial treats and in cards in the saloon car which week after week takes him to hostile fields. We know too total professionals and non-card-playing professionals, and professionals who have aged mothers and dependent brothers and sisters who have good reason to be proud of their famous relatives. If the people insist on spectacular football and are eager to pay for it, why should they not have it—for their own sakes, the profit of the players themselves, and on the score of brilliancy in the game itself; assuming, of course, that everything possible be done to promote order and fairness throughout? At the worst, it cannot be a very iniquitous kind of indulgence, and one does not often have it at its worst.

It is a pity that the sacrilegious book-maker should intrude upon the scene of these great football matches. He is not a pleasant object, and his strident offers of "six to four" or "evens" are irritants to many of us. But he is where he is in defiance of by-laws and placards, and in justice to the people it must be said that he does not seem to flourish on his football investments. Nothing is less likely

than collusion betwixt him and a body of professional players. As a rule, the "esprit de corps" in a League—as a typical professional—team is very keen. The committee, too, are not slow to mark any manifest shortcomings in the players. While the people themselves, at the back of committee and players alike, are the truest critics of all. Unless he were an utter reprobate and anxious to leave the neighbourhood, no professional would dare thus to sell his individual honour, at the risk, moreover, of selling it in vain, seeing that he could not answer for his ten comrades in the field as well as for himself.

There are, we have been told, black sheep in every fold. Metaphor apart, in professional football it may be said that the better the management of the team, the fewer the black sheep on its list. It is all very well to charge the members of a team with discreditable conduct when a series of unexpected losses come to dishearten both them and their followers. In such contingencies the rule, "Cherchez l'administration," may really be said to hold. If the members of the committee are all or half publicans—an improbable supposition, by the way—or mainly individuals with scant practical knowledge of football, next to no acquaintance with the rather odd underlying principles upon which a successful professional team of football players has to be raised, and with the bump of vanity on each of their heads extravagantly large—then there is sure to be trouble with the team early in the season. The public who wear its colours, keep its corporate photograph as an "eikon" in the cherished corner of their parlours, and swear by the team as the best in England, are apt to rave when the fruits of mismanagement declare themselves in the dwindling of the prestige of their darlings. Nor do they seem so very unreasonable if they prefer to clamour against the committee rather than abuse the players themselves. The latter are mostly mere youths, perhaps a little spoilt. Granted that they have talents—they would not else have been engaged—it is for the committee to see that the best possible is done to keep them from the evil that is in the world, at least until they determine to lease themselves in other directions.

Here is brief testimony on the subject. The following words are from an irate layman and enthusiast at a special meeting of one of the leading Association and



League teams in the land, called to consider its fallen condition and the remedy for its misfortunes :

"What is the cause of the shady play of the team in the out matches?" (hear, hear) "and can that play help causing suspicion? The Club should be, 'like Pharaoh's wife, above suspicion'" (loud laughter, and cries of "Read your Bible," "What about Cæsar?"). "The Club has lost the public confidence, and the cause of it is the drink element" (prolonged and general cheering). "The men have been encouraged to drink by those entrusted with the management of the Club" ("No, no," and "Quite right"). "Discipline has become a myth, training has been neglected, players have been drunk when they should have been training" ("Shame"). "The police have had to be called in at two or three o'clock on a Saturday morning to quell a drunken disturbance in the players' house, when they were due to leave the railway station at nine o'clock the same morning to play an important out League match" ("Shame," and sensation). "And, notwithstanding all these things, the Committee has not taken any action to protest against them."

As a sequel to the above meeting, the Committee implicated was called upon to resign, and resign it did. The public are pure in these matters, and the players are just what the dominating spirit, either their particular public or the committee, purpose to make them.

On the other hand, with a conscientious and able directorate, the career of a football player ought to be a delightful and dignified one. The laurels of victory are shared between players and directors. The latter keep the cups which are the trophies of the team's progress. They also, of course, control the exchequer. The former receive with heartfelt smiles the weekly wage which is proffered them smilingly. Added to their stipulated pay, they as often as not pocket an extra five or ten shillings weekly for important wins away from home. If the club's finances are very flourishing—and with gates of two hundred pounds or three hundred pounds weekly they well may be—it is perfectly just that the team should occasionally be treated with what are called "playing tours," either in the neighbourhood of the metropolis or in Scotland. Here they are fêted as they deserve to be. When the Sunderland team visited the Oval a few months ago to

play the Corinthians, private boxes at the theatre were placed at their disposal. The same notable team were also entertained at a banquet in their own town by Lord Londonderry; and when they travelled south for the Christmas campaign of 1892, they journeyed in a special saloon decorated snugly with holly and mistletoe. The Sunderland centre forward took it into his head to marry when his team was performing doughty deeds in the field. A subscription list was promptly opened on his behalf and headed with ten pounds. At the altar and subsequently he received the congratulations and blessings of a thousand or two admirers.

Of such are the rewards lavished on the skilled football professional who does his duty in the station of life to which circumstances and inclination have consecrated him. Every one is pleased with him—though in such a case "pleased" is far too insignificant a word. He earns excellent wages; sees a good deal of life; keeps himself physically in the best of health; and perhaps even lends his revered name for a new lotion, embrocation, football, or necktie. He is, in short, a thoroughly successful young man, and that without having done wrong to any man.

The members of the Sunderland team are the most typical of the existing English Association football professionals. They headed the League last year, in which for a spell the famous Preston North End held pre-eminence. Wherever they go about the land they are sure of an immense crowd of spectators. But they cannot compare with the Everton team in the support they receive at home. These clever lads, at the sixteen League contests of 1892-3, played before two hundred and sixty-three thousand people; giving an average of about sixteen thousand five hundred at each home match. Such magnificent patronage is of itself a stimulant towards excellence. It also means a handsome balance at the bank for the club; so much so that the Everton committee can afford to be almost reckless in their hire of new youngsters of promise in Scotland and elsewhere, and in their offers of extra "solatia" to the players for desirable wins away from home.

Were we mortals in other respects within viewing distance of perfection, we would fain lament the potency of filthy lucre in football affairs. As matters are, it seems needless either to bemoan or to be glad of it. The public, who enjoy the

thrills professional football affords them—and that in no brutal sense—are under no compulsion to analyse the ingredients of their dish of pleasure. And, as we have said, even if they did so, there would, four times out of five, be nothing discoverable to adulterate the integrity of their joy.

Professional football is professional self-control above all things. This must not be forgotten. There are many branches of human education. It is not given to all to graduate at Universities. Discipline of mind and body may be obtained quite as satisfactorily in the football field as in class-rooms and in pastime circles pure and simple. To our thinking, for instance, there is something that almost touches the sublime in the public announcement that a team of football professionals "have volunteered to be kept together on Sunday, and debar themselves of Christmas festivities so as to keep in condition for the important matches on the following day." Yet this occurred in the Midlands in 1892. The players were all lusty young men in the prime of their energy, and they could thus for honour's sake—plus perhaps a little cash—submit to self-mortification! Some may think this detail a sordid one. For our part we are content to estimate it much more nobly.

It were idle to deny that there are black spots on the picture of professional football, done after nature. But that is a defect which it shares with most other human inventions. The public cannot have their feast of sensations without sometimes getting more sensation for their sixpences than they desire. Nowhere as on a famous football field may one realise the eccentricity of human nature, and how men may become passion-driven almost in spite of themselves. It must be painful indeed to be howled at, as the referee not infrequently is, because he gives a decision which is righteous enough, yet not in keeping with the wishes of the multitude. It must be still more annoying for that gentleman when after a match he is followed by an enraged mob to the station, a distance of a mile or more, has his hat "knocked" off by stones, which might have killed him, and is besmeared with mud. This actual experience is by no means unique.

As a companion picture, however, you must see that of the same public when the team of their heart's delight is doing well.

How their faces beam with honest pride! Laughter then ripples on all lips. Instead of ill-sounding abuse, you hear adjectives and phrases of endearment, garnished it may be with other adjectives of an unpleasing kind which are civil or uncivil according to tone. This self-content is apt to prove contagious. It spreads from one dusky-skinned and corugated artisan to another. It sets old and toothless men grinning with gladness, and swearing they "have never seen nowt to ekal that." It makes the youngsters almost beside themselves with enthusiasm. The committee are touched by it. They may be seen having bouts of glee like the spectators, and clapping their own thighs or each other's shoulders in the strenuousness of their satisfaction. And, lastly, it affects the players themselves, the source and support of all this jubilation. These, having proved their superiority by a stout majority of goals, now "make rings round" their humbled antagonists, and divert the multitude with a deal of "gallery play"; antics rather of the circus ring than the football field. So it continues until the whistle blows. Then a resounding shout rings as the afternoon's epilogue, and you may chance to see certain of the heroes of the victory carried shoulder high to the dressing-room—regardless of the grime and other marks of vigorous labour with which they are decorated.

You may look on but one of these two pictures and say, "Such is professional football!"—choosing the bright or the forbidding picture, according to your bias or humour. But the man who wishes to be just ought to put them both side by side: ugliness and exhilaration hand in hand. It is very, very human, this modern mania. And just for that reason, if for no other, we for our part like it.

## A PHANTOM FORTUNE.

### A COMPLETE STORY.

MR. JESPER TODD, calling one morning at the lodgings of his friend, Tom Kirtley, found that individual in his easy-chair enjoying an after-breakfast pipe. Mr. Todd, fresh from his own trim home, thought the room terribly dingy and untidy. The breakfast-things were still on the table, the dust lay thick on the side-board, a large cross-bred bull-terrier slept in a corner of the sofa, and Tom Kirtley's feet occupied the only spare chair. Mr.

Todd knew not where to put his hat; yet his friend looked up at him with the smile of a perfectly contented man.

"Ah, old fellow," he said, "can't you find a place for your hat? Put it down on the sofa. Peter won't touch it."

But Mr. Todd evidently distrusted Peter, for he kept his hat in his hand.

"I think, Kirtley," he said, "you get worse, and I am sure your lodgings do. There was certainly a hat-stand in the passage the last time I was here."

"Yes," replied Mr. Kirtley, "there was; but I advised the old woman to sell it. The upstairs lodgers would play at first man out take the best tile, and it bred bad blood. But sit down and have a smoke."

Mr. Todd refused to smoke, though he took the chair which had hitherto supported his friend's feet. He was, he said, on his way to a meeting of the committee of Mrs. Simpson Porlock's Society for the Promotion of Refinement among the Middle Classes; and though that body had not as yet passed a formal resolution on the subject, he thought the general feeling of the members was in favour of putting down the use of tobacco.

"Kate," he concluded, "wants you to come and lunch with us to-morrow. We have a meeting in the afternoon in connection with the society. Mr. Prater Peck will speak on 'Refinement in the School,' and we thought that you, as a teacher, would be interested in the subject."

Mr. Kirtley smiled.

"Your wife's very good," he said, and then stopped.

"Well, will you come?" asked his friend.

"Really, old fellow," replied he, "I don't like to refuse, though that kind of thing is out of my line altogether; but I'm afraid I can't. One Mr. John Lynch, solicitor, Silby-on-Stoar, is due to call here at eleven, and will probably want me all to-morrow. You didn't know I'd come into a fortune?"

"No; have you, though?" said Mr. Todd, in the doubtful tone of one who suspects at least exaggeration.

"Yes," replied his friend. "None of your nineteen-guinea legacies, but every penny of a hundred a year in Consols. You never knew my great-aunt, Mrs. Walker? No more did I, but she must have heard of me, for the doubtless veracious Lynch of Silby says she has left me her little all. We broke up two days

ago. His letter came yesterday, and I'm going to retire."

"Indeed," said Mr. Todd, as heartily as his somewhat formal manner would let him, "I am delighted to hear this, Kirtley. I have often suspected that your sphere of labour was uncongenial to you. And what do you intend to do now?"

"Do?" repeated Mr. Kirtley, looking puzzled; "do—why, nothing, of course. That is, if you mean in the way of work. As to amusement, I'm game for anything within the compass of two pounds a week. Just at present I think I shall stay in town as long as there is any decent cricket to watch, and then tramp or tricycle about the country during the autumn. In the winter I might pop over to Sweden for some skating. Living's cheap in Stockholm, and the fare over isn't much."

"But," remonstrated Mr. Todd, "you surely will, after your holiday, devote your life to some useful object? Why not go in for literature, or read for the bar, if you object to teaching?"

"Why not?" replied his friend. "Well, to speak in parables, do you think an emancipated cab-horse with the chance of kicking up his heels in a field for the rest of his days would prefer to go into a training stable? Work! Why, you rich men, with the fads you call useful occupations, don't know what it is. When next week's dinners depend on this week's wages, then you find out what it means. Besides, the crowd round the ladders which lead to fame and fortune is quite big enough without me."

"But," persisted Mr. Todd, "you, with your abilities, might easily pass through the crowd, and win a footing on a ladder."

"Might I?" rejoined the other. "What if my toes are tender, and can't stand the preliminary trampling! No, no; the crowd looks uncomfortable and the ladders unsafe. A hundred a year is more than my share of the common stock, and I'll be content with it."

"In my opinion," said Mr. Todd, "that spirit of content has been your greatest enemy. You were satisfied with a pass degree at Cambridge; you cheerfully accepted a situation at ninety pounds a year, and now for ten years you have contentedly remained in it without even trying to raise yourself in your profession. Why, your salary has only been increased ten pounds a year in all that time, though I have often advised you to ask for more."

"When you knew very well," replied his friend, laughing, "that I wasn't worth it. No, the boss and I understood each other very well. He took the worry and the profits; I had the drudgery and the peace of mind. Each thought he had the best of the bargain."

"Well, then," persisted Mr. Todd, "putting ambition on one side, surely you will not be willing to lead an utterly useless life. Why not join us in doing good? Mrs. Todd would make you an assistant-secretary directly."

"To which society?" asked Mr. Kirtley, with a twinkle in his eye. "Don't you remember when your wife was president of the Association for the Prevention of Young Women going out Alone, I offered my services as an escort, and she wouldn't have 'em? Is that society still alive?"

"Well—er, no; not exactly," replied Mr. Todd. "You know the Dowager Countess of Featherly took it up because her son married that little milliner he used to meet going to work as he was going to bed; but when Featherly's wife reformed him, the Dowager made friends with her, and then turned round and ridiculed the society so much that we deemed it best to merge it in a more general mission. It really did useful work," concluded he, with a sigh.

"I dare say it did," rejoined the incorrigible Kirtley, "if you call that sort of thing useful. Did it never strike you that your plan of finding out what people like, and then forming a society to put it down, would bring the leisured classes to grief if you were strong enough to carry out your fads? The unmitigated dulness of his life would drive the working man to desperation, and he'd go for you and yours just for the sake of a little excitement."

"I fear," said Mr. Todd, with the smile of conscious superiority, "we shall never agree upon the subject of philanthropic effort. But come up to Highgate as soon as you have settled matters with Mr. Lynch, and Kate shall talk to you."

Mr. Kirtley promised, and his friend went off to his meeting.

Tom Kirtley and Jasper Todd were natives of the same provincial town. Tom's father, whom everybody thought well-to-do, sent his son to college, and died without a penny; Mr. Todd, senior, left Jasper two thousand a year. When Tom took a situation as assistant in a private school, Jasper came to London to

look about him. He found and married a girl with a fortune nearly equal to his own, and the pair had for ten years devoted most of their energies and a little of their money to trying to enter "the best society" by the gate of pseudo-philanthropy.

They flattered themselves they had succeeded, if not in entering the gate, in undermining the approaches. They went on deputations to Home Secretaries; their names were often found in the obscurer corners of newspapers; occasionally their societies were the subject of a scoffing leaderette. The notoriety hunter would rather be scoffed at than not noticed, so they were not without hope.

On the departure of his friend, Mr. Kirtley replaced his feet on the chair, refilled his pipe, and resumed his meditations. He was a very lazy man, and, strange to say, knew it. He did not, like most of his kind, blame everything but indolence for his want of success in life. His life was rather lonely; disparity of income is, after all, a great bar to friendship, and as the friends of his youth rose in the social scale they dropped the habit of association with the man who remained behind. Tom did not complain; prosperous men rather bored him than otherwise, they took things in such an absurdly serious way.

As to his moral character, he was a good-natured soul enough, though far too indolent to go out of his way to do a kindness. His dog he had picked up, a lost puppy, and he was very fond of it; but had it died, his joy at being free from the trouble it gave—a fighting bull-terrier is a pet not exactly suited to London lodgings—would probably have equalled his grief at its loss.

His tastes were simple, and his habits, even when on pleasure bent, economical. He had just decided that he would devote his savings, which he now felt justified in spending, to a long walking tour, when Mr. Lynch arrived.

The attorney was a rubicund, cheerful-looking personage—quite the right sort of man to arrange the transfer of a good legacy from a not too near relative. Tom guessed from his manner that his clients were mostly farmers and small tradesmen.

"All the better for me," thought he. "Won't charge so much as a regular tip-top adviser to the county families."

"Mr. Kirtley, I presume," began the lawyer. "Allow me to congratulate you,



sir. If you have no objection, will you call in your landlady just to give formal evidence of your identity? You have lived here eight years, I believe? Quite so; thank you."

The landlady was summoned and said what was required, whereupon Mr. Lynch continued:

"Can you oblige me by being at the Bank at ten to-morrow? Rather an inconveniently early hour for a Londoner, I fear"—Mr. Lynch had a fixed idea, probably based on his own habits when in town, that all Londoners went to bed at two a.m.—"but I like to combine pleasure with business on these little expeditions, and want to go to the Oval afterwards. I love a bit of good cricket."

"So do I, Mr. Lynch," rejoined Tom, "and I intended to look for it to-morrow at the same place, so your time will just suit me."

"Won't you stop," he went on as the attorney rose to go, "and have something to eat? You must be ready for it after your journey. I have some decent stout on draught in the corner there, and they will cook us a steak in no time."

Mr. Lynch's merry eye glistened as he replied:

"Thank you, Mr. Kirtley; but I confess I am peckish, and stout and steak to equal the London articles we can't get in the country. Why, I don't know, but so it is. Cricketer yourself, sir?"

"When I'm not too lazy," replied Tom, and then they talked cricket till the steak was ready. After it had been eaten, Mr. Lynch again prepared to depart; but the pair were on capital terms by this time, and Tom detained him, saying:

"Sit down, man, and have a smoke. I want to talk to you about that legacy. You know, I never saw my great-aunt Walker. I suppose you knew her well?"

"I thought I did," replied the attorney; "but, to tell the truth, her will surprised me."

"Indeed!" said Tom. "Then I suppose I was not her nearest relation?"

"Well," said the attorney, hesitating, "in the eye of the law you were. But—the late Mr. Walker left two offspring. The widow, strange to say, on her husband's death forty years ago, took these offspring, a boy and a girl, to live with her, and everybody thought she would leave them her money. But it's my belief that she hated them—a precious life she led them both, I've heard since her death—and this was

her revenge on them, their mother, and their—well, to strain a point, call him father."

"Then I presume," said Tom, "that my great-aunt was not exactly an amiable character."

"There are people," replied Mr. Lynch enigmatically, "of whom, when alive, the law of slander, and when dead, custom, forbids us to speak our minds. I am very much afraid, sir, Mrs. Walker was one of them."

"But, Mr. Lynch," asked Tom, "how are these offspring, as you call them, situated? Forty years ago. Why, they must be middle-aged now."

"Over fifty, both of them," replied Mr. Lynch. "But it is a sad story. The man is paralysed and half imbecile. The woman, though devoted to her brother, is a poor, helpless creature and not much more agreeable to those around her than her late, shall we say, stepmother? They must go into the House now, I suppose; the man anyhow won't cost the ratepayers much; he'll die, sure as eggs, if they separate him from his sister, as they probably will do."

Tom Kirtley was silent for a few minutes, and then he said:

"You have taken me quite by surprise, Mr. Lynch. I had no idea that there was anything of this kind in the wind. Can't something be done for them?"

"There was some talk down at Silby," replied Mr. Lynch, "of getting thirty families or so to subscribe a shilling a week each. But you know how that sort of thing generally ends; first one drops out, and then another; better let them go on the parish at once than come to it in the end."

"I wish," said Tom, after another pause, "the old woman had left them this money. I hate work, Mr. Lynch, and had intended to do no more, but I don't like the idea of that poor paralysed beggar going to the workhouse. I suppose I must try and do something for them."

"I don't think," said the attorney, "they have much claim on you, Mr. Kirtley. A man can hardly be expected to provide for the illegitimate offspring of his great-uncle by marriage."

"No," replied Tom. "It's not that. It's not their claim but my own peace of mind I'm thinking of. How much a week do you think they could manage with?"

"Well," said the attorney thoughtfully, "they had every material comfort in your

aunt's house. She had a good income, though the bulk of her property reverts to some distant relatives of her husband in Canada. It was, if I may say so without offence, as an expert in the malicious use of the tongue that she took it out of them. I don't think, considering what they have been used to, that they would be comfortable with less than thirty shillings a week. Poverty is, after all, but a relative term."

"Quite right, Mr. Lynch," assented Tom; "I found that out when my poor father died and my allowance stopped. It took me a year or two to find out how to rub along on my salary. Will the Canadian people do anything?"

"Too pious," was the reply.

"Then," said Tom, "I think I had better turn this money over to them and have done with it."

"No, no, my dear sir," said the attorney, "don't do that. In the first place, they are not fit to have the absolute control of such a sum, and in the second, even if you are generous enough to let them have the benefit of it during their lifetime you will in all probability survive them, and might as well have the reversion. Meet me at the Bank as we arranged, and in the meantime think it over."

So saying Mr. Lynch departed, and Tom did think it over. The longer he thought, the more he felt that it would be what in his rough-and-ready system of ethics he called "a dirty trick" to take the money.

"Bother the old woman!" he said to himself. "Why couldn't she leave her money to those who expected it? Can't let that poor beggar go to the work-house, anyway. Wish Lynch had held his tongue and left me in blissful ignorance. Let me see, now. The dividend will be a hundred and one pounds five; had better do the thing well if I do it at all; what with medical comforts, etc., thirty-five bob a week won't leave 'em much to squander foolishly. I'll give them that, and keep the odd ten pounds for 'baccy and emergencies. Dare say Lynch will consent to be almoner. He seems a good sort."

With this he dismissed the subject from his mind, and in the morning told Mr. Lynch the resolution he had formed. The attorney did not attempt to persuade him to change his mind, and refused to charge anything for his professional services in the affair. The pair spent the day together, and parted the best of friends.

According to his promise Tom went next day to the house of his friend, Mr. Jasper Todd. He found that philanthropist and his wife at afternoon tea, and for once in a way there were no visitors present.

"Well, Kirtley," began Mr. Todd, "what about the legacy?"

"There isn't any legacy," replied Tom, "or at least only the shreds of one," and he explained the circumstances of the case.

"I wish," he said in conclusion, "the power of making wills was taken away from spiteful old women."

Mr. and Mrs. Todd looked at each other rather guiltily. The fact was, Mrs. Todd's money had come from a spiteful old woman to whom she had been companion, and whose crowd of needy relatives had said nasty things about her will.

"Don't you think, Kirtley," said Mr. Todd to change the subject, "that you have been rather rash? How do you know this man Lynch's tale was true?"

"Oh! I know a liar when I see him," replied Tom lightly. "Lynch is a real good sort. Insisted on taking me to the match yesterday, and stood dinner, and the play afterwards. I'm off to Silby next week to stay with him for a month, and make the acquaintance of my pensioners."

After this it was clearly no use maintaining that Mr. Lynch might be a swindler, so Mrs. Todd expressed a hope that Mr. Kirtley might find his pensioners worthy of his bounty.

Mr. Kirtley laughed.

"Oh! I don't expect that," he said. "The man's a malicious idiot, and the woman drinks a little. But you can't wonder at it after the life they've led."

Mr. and Mrs. Todd both descanted upon this flagrant neglect of the first principle of all true charity—worthiness in the recipient; but they produced little effect on Tom, who remarked, as if in excuse of what he had done, that the pair would probably die soon.

"You say that, Mr. Kirtley," said Mrs. Todd severely, "almost as if you hoped they would."

"Hope they will!" echoed Tom. "Of course I hope they will; why should I wish them to live? But I must go now, as I'm due to see Lynch off from King's Cross at six-thirty."

When he had gone, his two friends shook their heads over him sadly, and

remarked feelingly on his heartlessness. They agreed that it would have been quite the proper thing to allow the wretched creatures to go to the workhouse, where the woman's love of drink could have been put under control, but to express a wish for their death was an outrage on the decency of conversation.

Perhaps it was; but on the whole it was lucky for Mr. Walker's unhappy offspring that Mrs. Walker left her money to a man who picked his words less carefully than Mr. Jasper Todd.

#### THE OLD YEAR.

ALL its waning days are counted,  
All its few decaying hours,  
Sacred to the wont and custom  
Of this busy world of ours.

With his strong hand drooping palely,  
With his laurel garland sere;  
On the threshold of his death-day,  
Sadly stands the poor old year.

Hush, the sobbing winds are saying,  
Sweeping over glen and lea;  
Hush, the branches murmur, clashing  
High on every leafless tree.

Hush, the river murmurs, ice-bound,  
Stealing to the sheltered dell;  
Earth and sky and life are sighing,  
Time is over, say farewell.

#### THE TWO BOSTONS.

A MUCH larger number of Englishmen know Boston, Massachusetts, than know Boston, Lincolnshire, and the reasons for this are plain. There is the still prevalent notion amongst travelling Britons that their own country needs but little attention at their hands. There is still the fine old crusted belief that Lincolnshire is a county of swamp and ague, unendowed with scenic or any other attractions; a belief fostered by the fact that until within the last year there was no Lincolnshire guide-book worthy of the name.

Yet there is hardly a patch of original fenland in the whole county; and although it cannot be classed amongst the beautiful counties of England, there are attractive pastoral bits about the Wolds, there is a picturesqueness and originality about the flat lands which impresses every visitor who recognises its unique character so far as our country is concerned; each of its chief towns abounds with historical and antiquarian interest, and there is no happier hunting-ground in all England for the ecclesiologist.

The two Bostons, unlike as they are to

each other in their general characteristics, and particularly in their surroundings, have points of resemblance in common. As a body corporate, the American child has long since outstripped the English parent, and, after passing through a period of scholastic, reserved, and, it must be added, priggish stand-offishness, is now striding ahead amongst the foremost commercial and industrial centres of the States. The parent threatened to drift for a while into helpless senility when the foreign trade, which had hitherto been monopolised by the Eastern ports of England, was, by the rise and development of America, transferred to the Western, but Boston was of too sturdy a foundation to be killed by a mere accident; new channels of trade have been opened of recent years, and an American visitor whom we met at the "Peacock" was quite disappointed.

"What did you expect to find?" we asked.

"Well, I guessed I should find a dead, cobwebby sort of old place, and it's so confoundedly lively."

In Lincolnshire Boston we do not find ourselves in that faint, sad light of other days which impresses us so profoundly in the towns of that other English marshland on the South Coast, such as Sandwich, or Rye, or Romney, or Lydd. He who has worked his way upwards through the Cambridgeshire fens, by such towns as Ramsey, Whittlesea, Thorney, and Crowland, and who anticipates at Boston a repetition of their silence and lifelessness, will be agreeably disappointed.

Improved communications both with sea and land, the formation of new docks, the development of new industries, have given it a new lease of life; it is a brisk, cheerful place, and although it may never attain again to the proud position it once occupied, that of being the third port in the kingdom, it should have a great future before it.

Not that Old Boston has followed the example of many other resuscitated towns, and has cast off from head to foot her ancient clothing in exchange for newer raiment, which she has not yet learned to wear with ease and grace. There is plenty of Old Boston left. There are streets and lanes leading off from the market-place, and down by the waterside, in which not a house is less than a century old, and which can show many dating back to the days of old merchant-princes like the Le

Spaynes, the Kymes, and the Husseys, when Boston had a large trade in wine, corn, and woollens, not only with Germany, and Flanders, and France, but with the great religious houses in all the neighbouring counties.

Quaint old street names such as Gaunt (Ghent) Lane, Wrangle, Wormgate, Prove Lane, and Packhouse Quay, meet us everywhere. Links with the past are continually reminding us that the revival movement is quite modern. The gable end of the old Saint Mary's Guild House, in South Street, still retaining its fine Perpendicular window, recalls the proud days of old when the town was ruled by its guilds, the others being Saint Botolph's, Corpus Christi, Saint George's, Saints Peter and Paul, and the Holy Trinity. Of these the names attached to streets remain, but nothing more.

Close by is the fine old Shodfriars Hall, part, it is said, of an old monastery. In Sibsey Lane, off South Street, are the remains of the old gaol, which in turn succeeded the powerful Dominican foundation—a row of sturdy arches with closely barred windows and stout doors. From this old relic we enter a little square of eighteenth-century houses, occupying the site of part of the friary close, and much visited by antiquaries for the sake of the fine gravestone, built into a house wall, of Wisselus, of Smalenburg, who died in 1340, no doubt one of the "Esterlings" to whom the town owed so much of its prosperity.

Farther along South Street, towards the Docks, we pass under massive iron gates bearing the town arms—a bull (unaccountably described as a ram couchant) on a woolsack, and three ducal coronets, with two mermaids as supporters—and crossing the "Mart Yard," where once the famous Saint Botolph's Fair was held, come to the old Grammar School, built in 1567.

Although South Street leads to the Docks, it has distinctly an old-world air about it. It runs by the side of the Witham, past ranges of old warehouses, and grass-grown quays, and dusty little low-browed inns with nautical signs, and here and there a fine old residence in its pleasant garden; so that without much straining of the imagination we can picture the scenes of excitement and animation hereabouts when the Esterling ships came sailing up with goods for the fair, and the purveyors from the great abbeys came ambling in to purchase their winter stores of sound wine and stout woollens.

No brand-new hotel has yet supplanted

the "Peacock"—a study in itself of old-world domestic construction, full of quaint little rooms, dark corners, odd, uneven passages, and meaningless-looking staircases; and with a panelled coffee-room containing a carved oaken chimney-piece of the same character as, but more elaborate than that which used to be in the chop-room of the old "Cock Tavern" in Fleet Street.

The glory of Boston is the church dedicated to Saint Botolph, who shares with Saint Nicholas the distinction of being the patron of mariners; and the glory of Boston Church is its tower, known throughout the length and breadth of fen-land as Boston Stump.

From afar Boston Stump proclaims the whereabouts of Boston. The mariner at sea strains his eyes for its guiding finger. The fen men for miles around base their weather prognostications upon the clearness or obscurity of its appearance. The pedestrian and the wheelman far away on the straight, dusty fen-land roads, make for it just as in the old wayfaring days did pilgrims, packmen, and pedlars, toiling along the monk-built causeways, which at rare intervals stretched across the wild, weird, lone expanse of quaking bog. A thing of beauty of which the eye never wearies is Boston Stump. Three grand storeys surmounted by a graceful octagon lantern, formed by arches turned diagonally over the angles of the tower, spring to a height of two hundred and sixty-three feet from foundations, courses of which have been found to extend under the river-bed.

In the third storey formerly hung the great beacon lamp, but when the octagon was added the lamp was placed therein, and the third storey became a belfry. The somewhat gaunt and bare appearance of its great arches, unrelieved by transom or tracery, still point to its original use. The tower was commenced on Palm Sunday, 1309, and finished in five years—thoroughly finished, too, for not a flaw or crack is perceptible in the masonry from top to bottom.

The church itself may be described as vast and imposing, rather than beautiful. Time and the hands of men have dealt hardly with it. Of its famous stained glass, hardly a fragment remains; of its numerous brasses, only one or two are now to be seen; the beautiful choir stalls have but recently had their canopies replaced; the rood loft has been destroyed; very few of the numerous monuments to



Church dignitaries and old Boston merchant-princes, for which it was renowned, exist; and the modern chime of bells harmonise but poorly with the magnificent tower in which they are hung.

A very striking view of the height of the tower may be had by standing beneath the vault and looking upwards to the base of the third storey—an unbroken vista of smooth, fresh-looking stone, delicately carved and moulded into a most harmonious and graceful "tout-ensemble." Small wonder is it that Americans flock to Old Boston in such numbers. In the town-hall, no doubt Brewster and his companion Pilgrim Fathers were brought up before the magistrates, after the frustration of their projected escape from Land's persecution to Holland. Of the original founders of New Boston, who sailed with Winthrop in 1630, John Cotton was Vicar of Old Boston, Atherton Hough was mayor, Bellingham was recorder, Leverett was alderman; three Boston men became governors of Massachusetts, and one, Coddington by name, was known as the "father of Rhode Island."

At any rate, it is a subject of common remark in Boston that American visitors not only require no guides about the town, but seem to know very much more about its ins and outs and prominent features than the majority of natives, go direct to all the points of interest, and have the histories of them at their tongues' ends.

In one respect Old Boston is very much less attractive than its namesake across the Atlantic. Its natural surroundings are decidedly unlovely and uninteresting. Approached from any quarter the prospect is the same. Flat land, unbroken by the merest pimple of a hill, stretching as far as the eye can range; every acre of it cultivated to the highest pitch of perfection; the monotony of the scene varied only by an occasional clump of wind-tossed trees, or a minaret-topped windmill, or a cluster of heavily-thatched cottages round about one of the bridges which cross the innumerable dykes by which the country is intersected in all directions, or by one of the stately church towers for which the county is famed.

Straight as arrows run the fen-land roads, raised high upon banks of luxuriant grass above the dykes of which the dark motionless water is rich with crowfoot, and brook-limes, and meadow-sweet, and the great blue water forget-me-not. In the more sequestered regions we may meet

with some of the ancient feathered inhabitants of fen-land, with the sharp-billed, shrieking curlew, the white-tailed sand-piper, the bullying Norway crows, the heron, and black-backed gulls, but the roar of the Lincolnshire agricultural machinery seems to have frightened them away from more frequented districts, and the solemn stillness of the air, even during the spring months, is remarkable.

But he who thinks to see a relic of primitive fen hereabouts will be disappointed. The new lease of life taken by Boston after its decay seemed assured, when the discovery of America led to a transfer of trade from East to West, when the River Witham began to silt up, when the dissolution of the monasteries deprived Boston merchants of a most valuable outlet for their trade, is distinctly reflected in the country around. The men are fine, stalwart fellows, the women fresh-coloured, and the children no longer prematurely crippled with ague, rheumatism, and the other ills inseparable from life in a marshy country. The cottages are neat and clean, beggars are rare, indeed during ten days, tramping through the fen-country, we did not meet one.

No. He who comes hither in search of the picturesque is doomed to disappointment, but the human interest of the land is intense.

Fresh from Old Boston, the huge Massachusetts city becomes invested with double interest in the eyes of the traveller. Great as is the change which has been wrought in Old Boston during the past quarter of a century, still more remarkable is that which has affected the American city. When Oliver Wendell Holmes, essentially the "doyen" of Boston, first attracted the world to his Breakfast Table, Boston stood aloof from the other cities of the States, prided itself upon the exclusive and almost aristocratic tone of its society, and upon its character as an oasis of culture and intellectual refinement amidst a bald, prosaic desert, wherein men drove themselves crazy with the "auri sacra fames." Poets, thinkers, dilettanti, found in the stately saloons of Old Beacon Street a congenial atmosphere which was denied them in Madison Avenue and Walnut Street; and in old-world houses which might have been transplanted bodily from some old-world English provincial town, the chosen people—that is, the scions of old Knickerbocker

and New England families, and the men and women of culture—met together to snub the outside money-grubbers, to pat each other on the shoulder, and to glory in the fate which had made them residents in the Hub of the Universe.

But much of this feeling has been swept away in the inexorable torrent of the World's Progress. Your latest made Boston citizen still calls his city the Hub, but he is much too practical and far-sighted a man to believe it to be so in its original sense. Boston has become not only essentially a city of business, but actually it has become a city of Irishmen. The proud old families, tracing their descent to East Anglian families, who once ruled the roast, have been edged into the side paths, whilst the Irish Mayor and the Irish Councillors, and their following of Irish merchants, tradesmen, and rowdies, swarm down the high-road, yelling what a quarter of a century ago would have been accounted absolute heresy.

Still, the first remark made by the English visitor to Boston is, "How English it all looks!" The lines upon which the old Colonists planned their town—that is to say, after the good Old Country fashion, upon no lines at all, but anyhow, higgledy-piggledy, just where a choice lot protruded itself in front of the Puritan nose—are still followed in the heart of the city proper; and the English visitor notes, perhaps for the first time during his exploration of American cities, winding streets intersected by innumerable lanes, and alleys, and footways, breaking out occasionally into squares, or circles, or triangles, just as he left behind him in old London City.

Moreover, the existence of the Common in the very midst of everything increases the illusion of being in England, particularly when we look at that part of Beacon Street which fronts it, and remember to have seen the twin brethren of these old, white window-framed, quaintly portalled, big-chimneyed houses, in many a quiet old English town, and in every old-fashioned London suburb, and when we look up at the big elm-trees on the Tremont Street side and recognise at once their nationality.

Of course the American street is there. Directly Beacon Street quits the Park, and gets on to the reclaimed land of the Back Bay, it becomes straight, broad, new, and magnificent. Commonwealth and Columbus Avenues are simply lines of palaces, and

in every direction are springing up straight streets of splendid mansions, which take us with a very sudden and long jump from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Let it be recorded to the credit of the Bostonians that they treasure fondly the relics which have come down to them from the old days. The old State House still stands midway between State and Court Streets. These were christened King and Queen Streets, and the Royal Arms shone upon the State House—or, as it was known, the Town House—summit; but who can blame patriotic Bostonians for wiping away names which meant but bullying and injustice to them, and for leaving Lion and Unicorn with nothing to take care of?

Still stands Faneuil Hall, built in 1742, and called the "Cradle of Liberty" from the patriotic meetings which were held within its walls during the War of Independence; and, strange to say, close to it the statue of Winthrop, the first personal embodiment of that Royal power which was to be hurled down with such a rude crash. Still stands the old King's Chapel, with unchanged title, whereto proceeded in due state on Sunday mornings their Excellencies and the élite of the old Boston courtly society, and the old King's Chapel burial-ground, dating from 1630. Still stands the Old South Church in the very busiest and noisiest part of Boston's busiest and noisiest street, and on a tablet over the entrance we read: "Old South Church gathered 1669. First House built 1620. This House erected 1729. Dedicating by British Troops 1775-6."

More than one attempt has been made to remove it in sacrifice to the Juggernaut of Business, but Boston's doughtiest champions, Dr. Holmes and Mr. Lowell, raised their voices with such effect on its behalf that it has been spared, and a "New Old South" has been fearfully and wonderfully constructed elsewhere.

Many another old-time relic remains—burial-grounds, such as the Granary, the Copps Hill, and the Old Central; houses, such as the Auchmuty Mansion, the Edes House, and the "Old Corner Book Store"; churches, such as old Christ Church; and spots famous in the stirring history of the last colonial period.

The charm of Boston lies very much in the fact that the new only serves to accentuate the old. Somehow, the Old South and the State House do not look out of place amidst the crash and turmoil of

Washington Street — once called, be it remarked, Marlborough Street. Their surroundings actually support them instead of rendering them ridiculous. The street winds and turns; no two houses are alike, and the palatial pile of the nineteenth-century insurance building or newspaper office jostles in the friendliest manner a gambrel-roofed, dormer-windowed structure such as the Old Corner Book Store, which was a book store in the days of Crispus Attuck and the "Boston Massacre."

But to our mind the centre of Boston's charm is the Common. The venerable elms; the Long Walk, which played so pleasant a part in the courtship of the Autocrat and the Schoolmistress; the pleasant leaf-shaded Mall under Beacon Street, of which the old-world houses peep through the foliage; the Old Central Burial Ground, with its lichen-grown slate tombstones — these led our steps far more readily to the Common than to the garish and overpoweringly wealthy-looking avenues of fashion.

Yet it was in the very centre of the fashionable part of Beacon Street that we found our beloved Autocrat at home. It may be readily believed that his study window did not look out upon the broad street, with its ceaseless stream of fashionable equipages and its faultlessly arrayed human swarm.

"When I look out," he said, "I have my whole life spread before me. There are the roofs of old Cambridge, where I was born, bred, and educated. There runs the Charles River, which I call my aviary, and on which I used to row long before rowing became an universal pastime; and there, on that wooded height, is Mount Auburn, where all my dearest friends lie buried. They are going to blot it all out with new buildings, and a new bridge has already cut off a big slice of my view; but it will last my time — it will last my time!"

If we weary of Boston itself, we can never weary of its suburbs — to our mind the most beautiful suburbs of any city in the world. There is Brookline, an undulating tract of woodland, dotted with villas, no two of which are alike, of which many are pretty and picturesque, some are simply curious examples of eccentricity, and a few are monstrosities. There is pleasant, rural Dorchester, and the Dorchester heights whence a grand panorama of Boston Harbour and Bay is obtained. There is Roxbury; there is Brighton,

beyond which is the famous Chestnut Hill Park and Corey Hill. Finally there is Cambridge, in which is incorporated Harvard with its old-world, stately group of buildings; Stoughton, Hollis, Massachusetts, and Harvard Halls and Holden Chapel. In Cambridge itself there is Longfellow's house, the Washington elm bearing the inscription, "Under this tree Washington first took command of the American Army, July 3<sup>d</sup>, 1775," and many an old-world house, of which perhaps the Wadsworth House, where the principals of Harvard used to reside, is the quaintest specimen. Still further afield are two excursions which no Englishman should fail to make.

The first is to Lexington, by the Boston and Maine Railroad, alighting at the station known as Munroe's, and proceeding along the course of the fighting on that eventful April day when we first loosened a hold on our magnificent colonies which was destined never to be fast again, as far as Concord. Every foot of the six miles of road has its interesting and stirring if, from an Englishman's point of view, rather humiliating association. Every historic spot has been carefully labelled, so that the traveller may literally read as he runs — or rather saunters, for hurry seems out of place amidst such solemn surroundings.

Let him note at Concord the original Old Manse of Hawthorne, into the boundary wall of which has been built that stone simply inscribed "Grave of British Soldiers," which inspired Russell Lowell's well-known poem. Let him stand on the bridge — which, by the way, is not the original "rude bridge that arch'd the flood" — and try to realise, amidst the absolute peace and silence of the scene, the momentous events of that sweltering April day when Earl Percy's veterans fled in ignominious rout beneath the hidden fire of a rabble of ill-armed, ill-disciplined farmers and ploughboys.

The second expedition is to quaint Salem, one of the least American of American towns, famous as having been the town in which in 1774 Massachusetts State assumed sovereign power, as the cradle of many generations of fine old sea-dogs, as the birthplace of Hawthorne, whose "House of the Seven Gables" is still shown, and as having been the scene of the Witch persecution of 1692.

Here we take our leave of the two Bostons. He who visits the one, and omits the other, leaves an interesting

chapter in comparative history unread; he who visits both realises more fully than before the truth of two famous sayings: that of Garrick, "a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," and that of Shakespeare, "one touch of Nature makes the whole world kin."

## THE GREY BOY.

A SHORT SERIAL STORY.

### CHAPTER VI.

FRAMED in the dark oak doorway was a most beautiful woman. To Leila's country-fied and unsophisticated eyes, she was dressed for a Court gala. Her dress was of the richest mauve-tinted silk. On the bare white arms and throat, on her fingers, in her dusky hair, blazed a splendour of diamonds. The very fan she carried was encrusted with them.

As Leila, dazzled and startled by the radiant vision, looked at Mrs. Anson, Mrs. Anson stared back in undisguised disappointment and disapproval, at her new governess.

But the next second the annoyance vanished, and she came forward with the loveliest of smiles. No welcome could have been more kindly and friendly.

"I do hope you won't find it dull!" said Mrs. Anson, after enquiries as to her comfort since her arrival. "We are miles away from every one!" Her voice was soft and musical. She spoke English fluently, the slight foreign accent giving it a delightful piquancy. "I was so sorry I could not come to meet you. But I was too ill to leave my room. So I sent a message to my brother-in-law, who was coming by the same train, to look after you. I hope he did so properly."

But a recollection of the look of blank astonishment and annoyance on Mr. Hesketh Anson's face, when he was apparently apprised for the first time of her existence, and his rudeness at the end of the journey, kept her silent. She was the soul of truth, and her narrow social training had not so far given her the ready wit to utter a polite commonplace.

"And Dolores! I hope you will like her. She is rather spoilt, I am afraid; but she is delicate. She is very imaginative and excitable too, and—requires a good deal of care, to prevent her mind running on unhealthy fancies. Ah! she has been talking already!" with intense annoyance

and a quick, keen glance into Leila's face. "I am so sorry. I was so hoping that she was forgetting that absurd notion. What has she been saying?"

Leila told her.

Mrs. Anson uttered an impatient exclamation.

"It is too absurd! How I hate that ridiculous story—I hope you don't believe in ghosts!"

Leila laughed, flushing the next moment, as she recalled her own inexplicable terror in the train the previous day.

"You will not allow it to scare you away like the rest of them! Elderly educated women, too! I can't think how they could be so silly. Perhaps I had better tell you the story, so that you will not be treated to all the thrilling additions coined by kitchen-maids and country folk. I need hardly ask you," with a pretty appealing, "not to listen to the chatter of the servants or village people, who will all be dying until they can tell it to you."

"I will not talk about it to any one," said Leila, on the impulse of the moment.

"The story runs, that nearly two hundred years ago the heir to this place disappeared. You must know, Miss Mallet, that my husband only bought this estate a few years ago, so it is really hard that we should be troubled with the family ghosts. He was a boy of about twelve, and it was generally believed that the uncle, the next-of-kin, knew more about his fate than he chose to say. But the suspicion was never proved, and he inherited the property, his own descendants enjoying it after him. But it was said that the inheritance did his branch of the family little good. His descendants were a bad and spendthrift set. The family's good name and fortune, with its position in the county, gradually declined. Its members were avoided by their neighbours. About ten years ago, my husband bought the estate from the last owner, who is now living on a ranche in South America. The ghost said to haunt the house is, of course, the spirit of the lost heir. He is called the Grey Boy, because he is always seen dressed in grey—that being the colour of the suit he wore when he disappeared. But there is a touch of commonplace prose in the mysterious visitant's appearance. He used to appear to each successive generation in the same style of dress as they themselves were wearing, changing his fashions as



time changed theirs. What is the matter, Miss Mallet?"

"Nothing!" laughing off the slight chill that had touched her, "only," shyly, "it makes the story more—thrilling, I think—the ghost changing his clothes. It seems almost as if he meant to show them that he did not belong to the dead past, but was an ever-living reminder in their own daily lives of the crime," she said hastily, startled by something that swept over Mrs. Anson's face. But the shadow passed, and Mrs. Anson laughed merrily.

"What a queer fancy! It is rather horrible, too. Somehow, such an idea never struck me before. I only thought of him as a ghost with an unusual wardrobe. Mostly they only seem to have the garment in which they stand upright. But," the flippancy vanishing into winning earnestness, "you will promise me not to let such a nonsensical story frighten you away?"

She held out her hand with a smile. Touched and fascinated, Leila laid hers in it.

"I will not go unless you wish me to," she said simply. But in her heart it was a promise.

She had only left the room a few moments when Leila discovered that she had forgotten her fan. She hurried after her with it.

But she did not overtake her, after all. Just as she was near the end of the passage leading from the school-room wing into the long corridor, which ran the length of the house, she caught the sound of Mrs. Anson's voice. She could not see her, as she had passed through the archway into the corridor, where she had apparently met some one.

"Ob, Hex! What a shocking little dowl! She isn't much of an acquisition, certainly. She looks like a shy schoolgirl. You must have had a depressing journey from the station with her," with a laugh.

"Look here, Charlotte, the sooner you get rid of her the better! How can you be such——"

"A fool!" with a soft laugh. "But confess—isn't she an improvement——"

Leila did not hear the end of the sentence, for she was speeding back to the other wing, carrying the fan with her.

The snow-storm continued. For two days the snow fell almost ceaselessly. The roads became impassable, and for nearly a fortnight Leila and her pupil were almost

entirely confined to the grounds. With the exception of Mrs. Anson's society, she being often with them, the life she and her pupil lived was isolated enough. During all that time she only saw Mr. Anson once. Dolores brought her father one afternoon into the school-room to introduce him to her new governess. He stayed and had tea with them, and was almost bolsterously cheerful. Leila hardly saw in his appearance the signs of the great delicacy of which Dolores had spoken.

She and her pupil had that portion of the house almost entirely to themselves. They had their meals there together, and except when she and Dolores went out together, she had rarely occasion to go into any other part of the house. The attention shown her when she first arrived was always continued. She was well waited on, but almost entirely by Martha. The school-room maid was a dull, half-witted English girl, who did her work and went away without speaking.

Leila, remembering her promise, coldly discouraged every attempt on the part of the only other English servant whom she saw—a housemaid, a pert, bold-faced young woman—to attract her attention. Leila began to suspect at last that it was not always chance that led them to meet in the passages.

To her great relief Mr. Hesketh Anson never came near the school-room, though Dolores was often with him in the other part of the house.

She had, however, little time to waste on the mere personal considerations of her life at Moorlands. As the days went by she found Dolores an absorbing influence. It was no easy task which she, in her youth and inexperience, had undertaken.

Dolores reigned almost absolute mistress over her parents and every servant in the house. Every whim and caprice which it was possible to gratify was indulged.

Her moods and her tempers were exactly what might have been expected under such circumstances.

So far, Leila had only seen them vented on others; the child not having yet tired of her new companion.

She seemed to have a certain amount of respect for her uncle, founded partly on fear. He had a terrible temper, she told Leila, giving an account of an incident which proved it. It was not always easy to check these domestic confidences, though Leila, whom they made uncomfortable, did her best to silence them. Dolores, in her

happiest and therefore most sociable moods, would rattle on, letting escape little details of the life at Moorlands which Leila would have preferred not to hear. It was no business of hers that no visitors ever called there, nor that Mrs. Anson, though she always dressed as if she were going to see a great many people, never went out to a ball or a dinner-party; nor that Mr. Hesketh Anson made every one in the house do as he liked. But she found that to manage the spoiled, passionate child, infinite tact and patience were needed. She began to dread equally her attacks of violent temper or fits of sullen depression.

It was in one of these talks, which, after all, were but the inconsequent chatter of a child, happy in the companionship she was enjoying, that Dolores told Leila how dreadful her uncle could be when he was angry. There was a black boy attached to the establishment, rejoicing in the name of Hezekiah. He was apparently an endless source of anxiety and disturbance in the household; his pranks, his freaks, his impudence, continually exciting amused tolerance, or calling down on him the indignant protest of the sufferers.

Hezekiah one day had made Hesketh Anson very angry.

"Uncle Hex nearly beat him to death." Dolores shivered nervously. "He looked dreadful—Hezekiah did. I met him as he came screaming along the long corridor, Uncle Hex running after him with a horse-whip. Hezekiah's face was covered with blood, and one arm was broken, and just as he got to me he dropped down on the floor as if he were dead. I don't know what happened after that, for I felt so funny, and Martha came and carried me away to my room, and I didn't seem to remember any more till I found papa holding me, and mamma giving me something to drink. Hezekiah was very bad for a long time after that, and that's why Uncle Hex can't bear Dr. Burton. I like him—he was so nice and kind. But our doctor was ill, and couldn't come, so they had to get Dr. Burton, who lives near here, to come and see Hezekiah; and he always spoke to me whenever he saw me, and one afternoon—I don't know how he found his way—he came right in here, and was talking to me, when Uncle Hex came in, and flew into another rage, and ordered him out of the house. He said it was just like Dr. Burton's confounded impudence——"

"Dolores!"

"Well, that's what Uncle Hex said. Dr.

Burton got as white as your collar—how is it you always look so nice, Miss Mallet?—but he didn't say anything. He has never come here since. But he always smiles and nods to me when I meet him out of doors, and if I am with my governess, speaks to me; but he scarcely takes any notice of me if I am with mother or father, or Uncle Hex. Nobody does, though some of the ladies smile at me when I am not with them. I wonder why people don't like father and mother? I believe," mysteriously, "that Uncle Hex doesn't really——"

"I am afraid you are boring Miss Mallet with these family confidences," said a voice behind them.

They both turned hastily. They were in the bowling alley, which opened off the billiard-room downstairs, and was a favourite place of Dolores' in bad weather. They were resting after a vigorous game of ball, which Leila had enjoyed as much as her pupil. Hesketh Anson had entered, unperceived by them. How much of the conversation he had heard, Leila did not know. But the fancied sneer in his voice filled her with shame and vexation. He would naturally suppose that she was listening willingly to this family gossip.

But before she could speak, he had pulled out a box of sweets and handed it to Dolores, who eagerly tore off the covers.

"Oh, Miss Mallet, they are the sweets you liked so much the other day!" handing it to Leila.

Leila declined to take one.

"They are not poisoned, I assure you, Miss Mallet!"

Leila looked up hastily, to find Hesketh Anson's eyes resting with a strange half-amused searching on her face.

"How stupid you are, Uncle Hex!" exclaimed Dolores, helping herself liberally. "As if Miss Mallet thought they were!"

"I don't know," he said, in an odd tone.

The colour flamed into Leila's face. "I am not afraid," she said distinctly, speaking from a sudden impulse, her dislike to him for the moment conquering her shyness. "Dolores," turning away from him, "put back those sweets, dear. You must not eat any more to-day. Give me the box to take care of for you," holding out her hand.

The presence of any member of her family always had an unfortunate effect on Dolores.

"Indeed I shan't!" she exclaimed, with impudent flippancy. "Uncle Hex gave them to me, and I'll keep them myself."

It was the first time she had been actually rude to Leila, though already during the past day or two, as she began to grow accustomed to her new governess, she had shown incipient attempts at temper and rebelliousness.

This was the first open act of insolence and defiance. Leila, dismayed by the suddenness of the affront yet felt instinctively that it must not be allowed to pass. In an instant the slight incident became a battle of will between herself and her pupil.

"Give it to me," she said quietly, forgetting entirely the young man, the consciousness of whose presence had, a second before, added a sense of humiliation to the real hurt the child's rudeness had inflicted.

The young man himself stood watching the scene with a queer earnestness.

"I shan't! So there! No one has ever made me do a thing I haven't wanted to do before! The other old things wouldn't have dared!" And the child, with audacious impudence, flourished the box over her head, executing some fantastically graceful steps in the direction of her uncle.

But she had not calculated on the youth and liveness that lay beneath the generally rather sedate movements of her new governess, nor on a certain other quality, disguised by the pale quiet of the girlish face.

With a flash, light and steady as a bird on the wing, Leila swept down on the child, and the box was taken out of her hand.

The young, pale-faced governess, rather paler than usual, stepped back the victor.

For an instant Dolores, literally petrified at her audacity, stared speechlessly at her.

The next, she flung herself, like some maddened wild thing, on Leila, beating at her with her fists. In the frantic onslaught she succeeded in getting hold of the arm that held the box, and before Hesketh Anson, who sprang forward, could reach her, the child's even, pearly teeth had met in the girl's arm. A stifled cry broke from Leila, but she held the box firmer, and an instant later, screaming and kicking, Dolores was in the grip of her uncle.

"You wicked little girl! See what you have done!" pointing at Leila's arm.

"I hate her!" cried Dolores, vainly trying to free herself.

"Please let her go," said Leila rather unsteadily, but with no hesitation.

For a second he hesitated, glancing doubtfully from the raging child to the young governess. Then he released his hold.

"She is ashamed of herself already," said Leila, her sweet voice still a little strained, but growing steadier with the cold contempt in it. "As much ashamed as I am for her. Go back to the school-room, Dolores. You will have your tea there, and then go to bed."

Dolores had persuaded her mother to allow her to dine downstairs that evening. Once the treat had been an almost constant one. Of late it had only been granted her on special occasions. Tonight was her father's birthday, and she had been looking forward to it for the last two days. Leila was also to be included in the party. For the first time she was to meet the family all together.

"You daren't," said Dolores. But there was a half-hearted note in the fierceness, and something almost like fright in her eyes. "Mother won't let you."

Leila thought it was probable. But with a flash of decision she determined that if her own orders in this matter were set aside she would, at all cost to herself, leave the house. The young man seemed to divine the thought, for something rather like triumph lighted his eyes.

"Leave the room at once," said Leila coldly.

Once again the child, with dangerous eyes, made a savage movement towards her. But there was no need of her uncle to step between them. For a second Dolores met the cold, steady gaze of her mistress, then her eyes dropped, and bursting into heart-breaking sobs, she turned and walked slowly away down the length of the room.

Leila's lips quivered as she stood watching her.

"I am afraid you will not have an easy time," exclaimed Hesketh Anson; "she has the devil of a temper. It is disgraceful!"

"It is not all her fault!" exclaimed Leila, her voice vibrating with a sudden passion which she could not control against the injustice of laying all the blame on the child. Whose fault was it, after all, but theirs?

"I am afraid she has been rather

spoilt," he said carelessly. "I suppose you mean to carry out your scheme of remedying our mistakes?"

Was he jeering at her?

"Certainly," she said, looking him straight in the eyes.

For a second, something like genuine sympathy and pity softened his face as he saw her standing alone in opposition to the powers that were.

"Miss Mallet!" he exclaimed quickly, "take my advice and get out of this as soon as you can. It isn't the right sort of place for you. You won't be happy here; you had far better go!" with ill-suppressed eagerness.

The suspicion that had haunted her ever since she came, that for some reason of his own her presence there was distasteful, and that he would be only too glad to get her out of the house, was suddenly confirmed.

"I have no wish to leave," she said, as quietly as she could, with the indignation and dislike rising hot within her.

As she turned away she caught a smothered sound which had a remarkable resemblance to that expression of his which Dolores had just quoted.

Her eyes brightened with scorn, and any personal sense of dislike and anger was

swept away in pure pity for the poor little girl who had been so cruelly wronged in her home training, and brought up in the society of such a wicked young man.

Dolores went to bed after tea. There was no interference from Mrs. Anson, much, it must be confessed, to Leila's relief. A reaction was setting in as a natural consequence, and her courage almost failed her at the last at the thought of entering into the field against Mrs. Anson.

She did not go down to dinner herself; Mrs. Anson did not send for her. She was very glad. Her life of seclusion at home had increased her natural tendency to shyness to an almost painful extent. She had quite dreaded that family dinner-party; but all the same she spent a lonely and unhappy evening in the remote school-room wing. She missed Martha with her fussy kindness, who every night would still look in to see that she had all she needed. But Martha, though she did not venture to speak out, hotly resented her treatment of her darling, and spent all the evening in an adjoining room to that occupied by Dolores, going in and out of the child's chamber to pet and console her, until Dolores suddenly turned on her, and ordered her to keep out of the room altogether.

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